

Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4891

S E C R E T BEIRUT 3996

NODIS

FROM THE AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT

SUBJECT: PLO AND 242

1. PRESS AUG. 15 REPORTED PLO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE WOULD MEET AUGUST 25. DECISION ON WHETHER TO ACCEPT PUBLICLY RESOLUTION 242 AND ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST WILL PRESUMABLY BE PRINCIPAL ITEM ON AGENDA AND PLO IS NOW ENTERING CRUCIAL PHASE DURING WHICH IT LIKELY TO SET ITS POSITION ON THIS ISSUE IN CONCRETE, FOR BETTER OR WORSE. THIS PRESENTS OBVIOUS OPPORTUNITIES FOR PALESTINIAN AND ARAB EXTREMISM, AS WELL AS FOR ISRAELI PROVOCATION, TO HELP PLO PUSH ITSELF OVER THE CLIFF.

2. THIS PROSPECT VERY MUCH ON MINDS OF PALESTINIAN MODERATES, SUCH AS WALID KHALIDI, WHO DURING BRIEF CONVERSATION AUG. 14 TOLD ME HE DOING HIS BIT TO BRING PLO LEADERSHIP AROUND TO ACCEPT OUR PROPOSITION, BECAUSE HE THINKS IT VITAL PALESTINIANS TALK DIRECTLY TO US RATHER THAN GOING THROUGH ARAB GOVERNMENTS, EACH OF WHICH HAS ITS OWN AXE TO GRIND. ECHOING REMARKS OF KUWAITI FONMIN TO AMBASSADOR MAESTRONE (KUWAIT'S 4559), HE SAID ACCEPTANCE OF 242 WAS POSSIBLE BUT PLO LEADERSHIP NEEDED SOMETHING TO SHOW FOR IT.

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3. SPECIFICALLY, KHALIDI SAID THEY NEEDED ASSURANCES REGARDING OUR INTENTIONS TOWARD CONCEPT OF PALESTINIAN STATE. HE KNEW THIS WAS DELICATE PROBLEM FOR US, BUT WONDERED WHETHER WE COULD NOT AT LEAST GIVE PLO SOME SORT OF COMMITMENT TO SUPPORT CONCEPT. HE NOTED THAT BALFOUR DECLARATION HAD NOT PROMISED JEWISH NATIONAL HOME BUT HAD SAID HMG VIEWED IDEA WITH FAVOR

AND WOULD TRY ITS BEST ENDEAVOR TO FACILITATE ITS ACHIEVEMENT.
HE ASKED IF IT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE TO CONSIDER SOME SIMILAR
MORAL COMMITMENT TO IDEA OF PALESTINIAN STATE. THIS IS IN
LINE WITH HIS EARLIER REMARKS REPORTED OUR 3907.

4. I NOTED STRENGTH OF ISRAELI REACTION AGAINST EVEN LESS
SPECIFIC TERMS SUCH AS "HOMELAND", AND EXPRESSED DOUBT THAT
WE WOULD BE PREPARED TO GO BEYOND OUR EARLIER STATEMENTS,
WHICH WERE REMARKABLE ENOUGH. PROMISED PASS QUESTION TO
WASHINGTON, HOWEVER, AND WE AGREED TO MEET LATER IN WEEK.

5. COMMENT: AM FULLY AWARE OF DIFFICULTY, NOT TO SAY
IMPOSSIBILITY, OF PROVIDING WHAT KHALIDI IS ASKING. I
FURTHERMORE GATHER THAT HIS REMARKS DO NOT REFLECT LATEST
STATE OF PLAY OF OUR EXCHANGES THROUGH ARAB GOVERNMENTS.
NEVERTHELESS OFFER FOLLOWING UNSOLICITED ADVICE:
WE ARE AT CRITICAL JUNCTURE, AND STAKES ARE HIGH. IF WE
ALREADY PLAN TO COME FORWARD AT SOME POINT IN MORE EXPLICIT
SUPPORT OF PALESTINIAN ENTITY THAN WE HAVE DONE IN PAST,
OR EVEN IF WE ARE ONLY PREPARED TO REAFFIRM OUR PAST
DECLARATIONS ON SUBJECT, PERHAPS NOW IS THE TIME TO DO SO.
IF WE ARE GOING TO HAVE CONFRONTATION WITH ISRAELIS ON THIS
ISSUE SOONER OR LATER IN ANY EVENT, AS SEEN FROM THE NARROW
OPTIC OF BEIRUT IT IS BETTER TO DO SO SOONER, WHEN WE CAN
STILL HOPE TO HAVE SOME IMPACT ON PALESTINIAN POLITICS.

PARKER

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